

Managers Guide to Work Experience Placements



Version 3.0

1.0 Purpose

This document details WCC guidance on Work Experience Placements.

2.0 Introduction

Warwickshire County Council (WCC) welcomes work experience placements and will endeavour to make their work experience placements as informative and interesting as possible within a safe working and learning environment. Within Warwickshire it is the young person's responsibility to identify their own work placement and schools actively encourage young people to make contact with prospective employers so most will write in or telephone direct. However, parents/carers may also contact WCC and some requests may come via WCC staff.

Each year a booklet is produced of all available opportunities across the Council within each of the Groups. This co-ordinated approach helps WCC to ensure the scheme is open to all Warwickshire students whilst ensuring students are safeguarded and data protection is fully considered (placements are subject to change, due to current WCC transformation programme).

Your own Group has a "champion" who has already identified placements within your Group and coordinates them. If a work experience placement is offered to students other than those in the booklet these placements **must also be notified** to the WCC Work Experience Team (wccworkexperience@warwickshire.gov.uk) and they will inform your own Group "champion". Schools will not be required to notify of any placements on their own sites. Please note however that it is the manager/supervisor who will directly supervise and be responsible for the health and safety of the placements and not the Group "champion".

Work experience offers students the opportunity to prepare for the challenges of working in the adult world. However, if the working environment is not carefully controlled, students may become involved in activities where there is potential for injury.

Whilst employing students we have an opportunity to instil within them an understanding and importance of health and safety which will help them not only throughout their working life, but in their everyday life as well. Sensible health and safety at work is about managing risks rather than expecting them all to be eliminated.

Periods of work experience will probably be the first time that young people experience the work environment. Good preparation and organisation of placements is essential if these opportunities are to be rewarding and a safe introduction to the world of work. Students will face unfamiliar risks and this will mean that there is a heightened risk to them because of their

possible lack of awareness of existing or potential risks, and their lack of maturity, experience and training. They are also likely to lack confidence and be eager to impress or please others. This guidance identifies the controls WCC will undertake to ensure the health safety and welfare of work experience placements.

3.0 Legislation

In compliance with the Health & Safety at Work Act etc.1974 WCC must ensure so far as is reasonably practicable that their employees including students on work experience are not exposed to risks to their health & safety. Under Health & Safety legislation all students on work experience must be provided with the same health, safety and welfare protection given to other employees with additional requirements that must be met for young persons. Legislation that specifically applies to work experience is as follows:

- Health & Safety at Work etc. Act
- The Management of Health and Safety Regulations
- The Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act
- Health And Safety (Training for Employment) Regulations
- The Employers Liability Compulsory Insurance Act
- Working Time Regulations
- Education (Work Experience) Act

4.0 Insurance

Work experience placements undertaking normal work placements are classed as employees for the purposes of the Council's employers' and public liability insurance and full cover will automatically apply. If you have any questions please contact the Insurance Team, Resources Group, telephone 01926 418160.

5.0 Manager/Supervisor Responsibilities

As an employer WCC has a statutory obligation to assess the significant health and safety risks to all employees and this requirement extends to work experience students for the duration of the placement.

Risk Assessment

The effectiveness of WCC's risk management arrangements is what matters. Managers should already be managing the risks in their workplaces and they are best placed to assess whether or not they need to do anything additional for a new young person joining them. Schools and colleges, or those organising placements, should simply ask sensible questions, in proportion to the level of risk, to satisfy themselves that those arrangements are in place.

You should simply use your existing arrangements for risk assessments and management of risks for young people. A separate risk assessment is not required specifically for work experience students, as long as your existing assessment already considers the specific factors for young people. Furthermore, there is no requirement to re-assess the risks each time an employer takes on a new work experience student, provided the new student has no particular needs.

- Avoid repeating your assessment of the risks if a new student is of a broadly similar level of maturity and understanding, and has no particular or additional needs (the organiser or parent should tell you if they have)

- If you do not currently employ a young person, have not done so in the last few years or are taking on a work experience student for the first time, or one with particular needs, review your risk assessment before they start
- Discuss the placement in advance with organisers and take account of what they and the parents or carers tell you of the student's physical and psychological capacity and of any particular needs, for example due to any health conditions or learning difficulties
- Keep any additional work in proportion to the environment
- For placements in **low-risk environments**, such as offices or shops, **with everyday risks** that will mostly be familiar to the student, your existing arrangements for other employees should suffice
- For **environments with risks less familiar** to the student (e.g. print unit), you will need to make arrangements to manage the risks. This will need to include induction, supervision, site familiarisation, and any protective equipment needed
- For a placement in a **higher-risk environment** such as waste sites/vehicle workshops you will need to:
 - consider what work the student will be doing or observing, the risks involved and how these are managed; and
 - satisfy yourself that the instruction, training and supervisory arrangements have been properly thought through and that they work in practice
- You may, in particular for **higher-risk environments**, need to consider specific factors that must be managed for young people, including exposure to radiation, noise and vibration, toxic substances, or extreme temperatures. Where these specific factors exist in your workplace, you should already have control measures in place. This will also apply to legally required age limits on the use of some equipment and machinery (e.g. forklift trucks and some woodworking machinery). Consider whether you need to do anything further to control the risks to young people
- Explain to parents/carers of children what the significant risks are and what has been done to control them. This can be done in whatever way is simplest and suitable, including verbally, and is very often done via the school or college **before** the student starts the work placement

Please note that for environments with less familiar risks to young people and/or those in a higher risk category the school may wish to carry out a physical check prior to the placement beginning. Separate guidance for schools is also available www.warwickshire.gov.uk/SchoolHSDocs.

For further information on Risk Assessment, refer to the WCC Risk Assessment Policy and Guidance.

6.0 Prohibitions/Restrictions

There are other agents, processes and work that should be taken into account when employing a young person. The following list doesn't cover all of those, but if any of the issues are relevant to your workplace you can find more information on the Health and Safety Executive Website www.hse.gov.uk:

- biological agents
- working with chemicals
- working with lead and lead processes
- asbestos
- working with explosives, including fireworks
- working with compressed air

- construction, including demolition
- electrical safety
- agriculture
- manufacturing

Work Experience begins in school year 10/11 and the minimum age of students undertaking this is 14 years. WCC cannot employ young people less than 13 years of age.

However, for advice and guidance on young people in employment (including volunteer work) please contact the Child Employment and Children in Entertainment Officer within People Group telephone 01926 742201.

Working hours

Working hours are not governed by health and safety law. Young people and children have different employment rights from adult workers and are subject to protections in relation to the hours they can work.

A young worker cannot usually be made to work more than eight hours per day or 40 hours per week. These hours cannot be averaged over a longer period and you're not allowed to ignore these restrictions.

In addition, an employer must ensure that no young person works during the "restricted period". The restricted period is the period between 10.00pm and 6.00am or, in a case where the worker is contracted to work after 10.00pm, the period between 11.00pm and 7.00am. The working time and night working restrictions are subject to various exemptions relating to particular occupations and particular circumstances

7.0 Induction

Managers/supervisors must ensure a formal induction to the workplace is conducted on arrival. In the induction process, the student should be given a basic introduction to health and safety i.e. first aid and fire evacuation procedures and specific risk assessments should be explained and checked that they understood, where relevant. Students must know how to raise health and safety concerns.

A checklist is attached for your use (**appendix 1**). A copy of this checklist is to be kept by the manager for the duration of the placement and a copy given to the student. After the placement ends the completed checklist must be sent to the work experience team, wccworkexperience@warwickshire.gov.uk.

8.0 Training/Supervision

Managers/supervisors must provide information, instruction, training and supervision. This is particularly important for work experience students

A work experience student must be closely supervised during their placement and should receive appropriate training and information when they begin work experience - they need it to increase their capabilities and competencies to a level where they can do the work without putting themselves and others at risk. Information must include, as a minimum:

- an explanation of the work activities and any associated significant risks and control measures in place

- the names of nominated supervisor(s) and one person with overall responsibility for health & safety during the placement
- instruction on any equipment they will be using
- awareness of any equipment they must not use or only use with supervision
- specific procedures relevant to their work activities

9.00 Parent/Work Experience Student/School Responsibilities

Parents must provide their consent to the work experience placement, normally by signing a form which includes the company details, duties to be undertaken, and the risk assessment and control measures. This process will be arranged by the Work Experience Co-ordinator within the relevant school.

Parents must provide WCC, generally via the school, with relevant information about their child's/own medical or behavioural conditions, which may make the placement unsuitable for them. This information will be supplied to the placement provider, either by the school Work Experience Co-ordinator or directly by the student, so it can be taken into account in the risk assessment.

Parents must inform the school or WCC of any actual or potential health and safety problems during the placement which the work experience student may tell them about whilst on placement.

10.0 Contact Information

All health, safety and wellbeing information is available on the intranet. Go to:
Intranet > HR > Health, Safety and Wellbeing

For Schools, refer to the health and safety document library on
www.warwickshire.gov.uk/SchoolHSdocs

Alternatively you can contact the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service on
healthandsafety@warwickshire.gov.uk or telephone 01926 476803.

Further Information (to be used where relevant)

1. Plant/machinery/equipment must not be used by students.
2. Ensure that training has been given on the use, storage, maintenance and reporting of defects for any items of PPE supplied if relevant to the placement.
3. Basic manual handling techniques should be explained (this can be done by use of guidance notes e.g. from the HSE.)
4. Explain local procedures for dealing with conflict /aggressive behaviour where they exist.

This list is not exhaustive, there may be other on-the-job training identified for this role.

These guidelines should be used in conjunction with the H&S Corporate Induction Booklet, policies as well as local procedures and safe systems of work.

If you require any further information, contact the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service on 01926 476803 or email healthandsafety@warwickshire.gov.uk.

Last Reviewed by	Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service	
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